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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 000302

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SUBJECT: SECRETARY MINETA ELICITS COMMITMENTS FROM MINISTER
KITAGAWA ON CIVAIR TALKS AND BASA

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11. (SBU) Summary: At Secretary Mineta's urging, Transport Minister Kitagawa promised to become involved personally in upcoming civil aviation talks. Minister Kitagawa also agreed with Secretary Mineta on the need to actively pursue the Bilateral Aviation Safety Agreement (BASA) and to consider carefully the U.S. candidate for ICAO Secretary General. The cabinet members also discussed slot constraints at Narita and the future of Haneda airport. End Summary.

Civil Aviation

12. (SBU) Secretary Mineta and Minister of Land Infrastructure and Transport (MLIT) Kazuo Kitagawa expressed their satisfaction on the just concluded Transportation Security Ministerial (January 11-13) hosted by Japan in their meeting on January 13. Secretary Mineta noted that the civil aviation relationship between the U.S. and Japan was underpinned by the 1998 amendment, in which both sides had agreed to pursue further liberalization. The Secretary noted that there had been many meetings since then and that almost every year of his tenure he had come to Japan to seek progress on negotiations, but the full potential of the 1998 agreement had not been obtained. In another effort to further progress, in April 2005, he had taken new rights at Narita off the table but we were still unable to make the progress we should. The Secretary continued that during all this time he had been personally involved on a regular basis in the negotiations. He asked Kitagawa to likewise be personally involved to track the negotiations to see if we could make progress and expressed his belief that we could.

13. (SBU) The Secretary also noted that our success last year in reaching agreement with China to raise weekly frequencies from 53 to 249 was due to the personal involvement of himself and his Chinese counterpart. China found this agreement so beneficial that it wanted to move quickly to talks to further liberalize the agreement toward Open Skies. Secretary Mineta continued that with the growth of Open Skies agreements in the region and technological improvement, Japan risked "overflight" and said that a restrictive agreement was not in Japan's long run interest. The Secretary closed by expressing confidence in the Embassy civair officers and his

negotiators but again said that he would remain involved in the talks and asked that Minister Kitagawa would as well.

14. (SBU) Minister Kitagawa responded that he usually gave general directions in bilaterals but left specific matters to his negotiators. Nonetheless, he noted and respected the Secretary's request. He quipped that being involved would

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mean he would have to negotiate with his negotiator. Nevertheless as the discussion progressed he promised to remain involved and said that he would watch the negotiations "very carefully". Minister Kitagawa's response also included the Japanese position on the number of slots maintained by U.S. airlines at Narita. He said that he had requests for new service at Narita from 40 countries and that these countries questioned why Japan allowed the United States so many slots. He maintained that the number of U.S. slots at Narita's was greater than Japan's, a fact the general public did not know. He said the talks should discuss the slot situation. He added that with Centrair and completion of runways at Narita and Haneda the situation would change significantly by 2010 and the talks should take this into consideration. He noted that completion at Haneda might slip to 2010 (from 2009) but that Haneda was mainly seen as a domestic hub. He closed with a pitch to use the new Osaka international airport in his home region.

BASA; ICAO

15. (SBU) Secretary Mineta noted the importance of quickly completing the Bilateral Aviation Safety Agreement (BASA) to support Japanese and U.S. manufacturers cooperation in developing new aircraft. He offered U.S. help in any way possible and hoped that the BASA could be signed at the September 2006 Safety Forum. Kitagawa said it was their intention to actively discuss this issue.

16. (SBU) Secretary Mineta noted concerns with the current leadership of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Secretary General. The United States had expected France to nominate a candidate but when they did not the

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United States decided just the previous day to nominate William Voss, a long time manager at ICAO of integrity. Kitamura promised to consider carefully Voss' candidacy.

17. (SBU) Delegation Members:

US Government Participants:
Secretary Mineta

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Andy Steinberg, Chief Counsel
Tyler Duvall, A/S for Transportation Policy
David DeCarme, International Transportation and Trade Office
James Zumwalt, Economic Minister-Counselor, Embassy Tokyo
Daniel Fantozzi, Economic Counselor, Embassy Tokyo
Chris Metts, FAA Attach, Embassy Tokyo

GOJ Participants:

Kazuo Kitagawa, Minister of Land Infrastructure and Transport
Hiroshi Maruyama, Vice Minister of Land Infrastructure and Transport
Ryuhei Maeda, Assistant Vice Minister of Land Infrastructure and Transport
Teiji Iwasaki, Director General for Japan Civil Aviation Bureau
Norifumi Ide, Deputy Director General for Japan Civil Aviation Bureau

Postscript

18. (SBU) On January 18, Minister Kitagawa told Osaka Consul General Daniel Russell that he had thoroughly enjoyed his

time with Secretary Mineta and appreciated very much the time the Secretary spent in Japan. Minister Kitagawa said he appreciated the Secretary's position in the Cabinet (Kitagawa is the only Komeito member of the cabinet in Japan) and felt that the Secretary was a skilled politician who was in tune with the issues that mattered to the voters.

DONOVAN